

1. The reply brief filed 6/12/07 has been entered and considered. The application has been forwarded to the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences for decision on the appeal.
2. In order to address a minor informality, section 9 of the Examiner's Answer of 6/1/07 is replaced below. The new section 9 fully copies the rejections made in the Final Rejection of 6/15/06.

(9) Grounds of Rejection

The following ground(s) of rejection are applicable to the appealed claims:

Claims 1-4, 6-8, 14-15, 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Klein '645 in view of Klein '852 for substantially the same reasons stated in the last Office Action.

The patents to Klein show fishing line connectors. Klein '645 shows a female connector H having an outer surface with first and second opposite ends. Klein shows the outer surface having an aperture 25 therein. Klein shows a first end connected to a first fishing line section L. Klein shows a second end having a coaxial opening 23. Klein shows the connector having a coaxial interior feature 30 with radial extent. Klein '645 shows a knot 33 in a second fishing line F that acts to keep the line in the connector. The patent to Klein '852 shows a similar connector having a male connector 41 having a radial extent greater than the diameter of the female connector 45 due to barbs 51. At least one of the connectors is resilient, such as the barbs 51 of the male connector, so that the second end of the male connector compresses or the interior feature of the female connector expands to allow passage of the second end of the male

connector axially past the interior feature. In reference to claims 1, 14, and 18, it would have been obvious to provide Klein '645 with a male connector to replace the knot in the line since merely one equivalent connector is being replaced by another and the function is the same. In reference to claim 2, inherently, in Klein '645, the female connector is removably connected to the first fishing line section. In reference to claim 3, Klein shows the axial bore of first end of the female connector having a diameter greater than a diameter of an end of the first fishing line section and less than the diameter of a knot formed at an end of the first fishing line. In reference to claim 4, Klein '852 shows a male connector with a head (not labeled but see Fig. 2) at a first end and a plurality of petals 51 having a greater radial extent than a radial extent of the head. In reference to claim 18, Klein does not disclose replacing line segments by cutting the line and then discarding the line and male connector and replacing the section with a second male connector and another fishing line section, but it would have been obvious to do so in order to change rigs mounted to the male connector.

Claims 9-11, 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Klein '645 in view of Klein '852 as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Boyer substantially the same reasons stated in the last Office Action.

The patents to Klein have been discussed above and do not show a float used with the rig. The patent to Boyer shows a float 10. In reference to claim 9 and 17, it would have been obvious to provide Klein with a float as shown by Boyer to fish at a certain depth. It would have further been obvious to pass the end of the first fishing line through the bore of the float noting Fig. 2 of Boyer. In reference to claim 10, Boyer shows a radially symmetric float. In reference to claim 11, Boyer shows a tapered float in Figs.

Art Unit: 3643

The application is being forwarded to the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences for docketing and decision.

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/Kurt Rowan/

Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3643